



Dr. Gary Norris

Dr. Gary Norris began his tenure in Waterloo, IA, on July 1, 2008. He started his career in 1972 as a vocal music teacher in Kansas. Six years later, he became a high-school administrator. In 1983 Dr. Norris obtained his Ph.D. degree in Education Leadership from Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas.

Prior to coming to Iowa, Dr. Norris had been a school superintendent for 26 years, serving in Kansas, Minnesota, and Florida. He first served as Superintendent of the Satanta, Kansas School District from 1982-1985; the Hibbing, Minnesota, Independent School District from 1985-1989; the Indian River County School District in Florida from 1989-1994; the Salina Public School District in Kansas from 1994 to 2004; and for the four years prior to his coming to Waterloo, he served as Superintendent of the Sarasota County School District in Florida, the 100<sup>th</sup> largest school system in the United States.

In Sarasota, Dr. Norris launched a new strategic vision for the district—NeXt Generation Learning—which acknowledges that we must find new and engaging ways to ensure that all children learn high much higher levels, placing each child on a ***pathway for success***. In addition, he

- joined ranks with Sarasota County Government in a unique partnership to share Informational Technology services—consisting of a shared network and shared personnel.
- installed interactive whiteboard technology in every classroom in the district (over 3500 classrooms)
- built a new technical-high school;
- worked in partnership with the teacher's union to expand research-based collaborative planning activities;
- implemented a research-based screening process for teacher selection;
- organized the high schools into career-based small learning communities;
- developed a principal's instructional leadership academy; and
- passed a \$250 million operational referendum to fund the district's strategic vision: NeXt Generation Learning.

Dr. Norris also assumed a number of state leadership roles, most recently in the area of school finance. He was president of "Schools for Fair Funding," a group of 14 mid-sized Kansas school districts that sued the state of Kansas over inadequate and inequitable

school funding. The lawsuit was successful at the district court level, and the decision was recently upheld by the Kansas Supreme Court.

Dr. Norris and his wife Julie, a nurse, have two grown children, Nathan and Natalie. An active member of the community, he has served as: President of the Salina Area United Way, President of the Salina Rotary Club, Worship Leader at his church, member of the Boy Scout Executive Council, and an organizer of the Community Roundtable. In Waterloo, Dr. Norris serves on the boards of Junior Achievement, Cedar Valley United Way, Cedar Valley Promise, Waterloo Industrial Development Association, Cedar Valley Chamber of Commerce, and is a member of the Waterloo Rotary Club.